

Message Text

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TO AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE NIACT IMMEDIATE
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PASS US OBSERVER DELEGATION

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PORG, UNESCO, EXK, XL, XM

SUBJ: UNESCO INTERGOVERNMENTAL CONFERENCE ON COMMUNI-
CATION POLICIES IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

REFERENCE: SAN JOSE 3477

1. IN ANY CONTACTS WITH NEWS MEDIA, US OBSERVER DELEGATION
SHOULD CONFINE REMARKS TO GENERAL OBSERVATIONS, ALONG LINES
SET FORTH BELOW. GIVEN US OBSERVER STATUS AT A REGIONAL
MEETING OUTSIDE UNESCO GROUP TO WHICH US BELONGS (EUROPEAN
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GROUP) AND GIVEN AMERICAN SENSITIVITY TO ANY US ACTIVITIES

AT MEETING THAT COULD BE INTERPRETED AS INTERFERENCE IN THEIR REGIONAL AFFAIRS, DEPT BELIEVES DEL SHOULD MAKE EVERY EFFORT TO AVOID BECOMING INVOLVED WITH PRESS IN DETAILS OF CONFERENCE. IT WOULD BE ESPECIALLY RISKY TO DO SO WITH RESPECT TO THE CONTROVERSIAL VENEZUELAN DRAFT RESOLUTION DESPITE FACT IT CONTAINS SO MUCH TO WHICH US IS OPPOSED.

2. ON OTHER HAND, WE WOULD LIKE USDEL, IN INFORMAL CONTACTS WITH OTHER DELS IN CORRIDORS, TO MAKE KNOWN OUR PRINCIPAL CONCERNS RE VENEZUELAN DRAFT, IN HOPE OF PROVIDING LIKE-MINDED STATES WITH USEFUL AMMUNITION FOR REMAINDER OF CONFERENCE. INSTRUCTIONS FOR THESE APPROACHES ARE BEING SENT SEPTEL.

3. THE UNITED STATES RECOGNIZES THE SOVEREIGN RIGHT OF ANY NATION TO STRUCTURE ITS GOVERNMENT AND TO ESTABLISH POLICIES IN ACCORDANCE WITH NATIONAL NEEDS AS THAT NATION PERCEIVES THEM. THIS WOULD APPLY TO NATIONAL NEWS AGENCIES, CINEMA INDUSTRY, OR WHATEVER.

4. THE UNITED STATES IS AWARE OF THE CONCERN OF THE DEVELOPING NATIONS THAT THERE IS AN IMBALANCE IN THE FLOW OF INFORMATION BETWEEN THE DEVELOPED AND DEVELOPING COUNTRIES. AT THE 18TH GENERAL CONFERENCE OF UNESCO IN 1974, WE STATED THAT THE UNITED STATES PLACED HIGH PRIORITY ON UNESCO'S PROGRAMS TO ASSIST DEVELOPING COUNTRIES TO EXPAND THEIR COMMUNICATION CAPABILITIES IN ORDER TO CORRECT THAT IMBALANCE. WE CALLED FOR AN EXPANSION AND MORE EFFECTIVE USE OF BOTH DOMESTIC AND REGIONAL RESOURCES THROUGH COOPERATIVE SHARING OF THE MOST ADVANCED TECHNOLOGY AND THROUGH THE EXCHANGE AND TRAINING OF MEDIA PERSONNEL. WE CONTINUE TO SUPPORT THAT POSITION.

5. THE UNITED STATES WOULD HOPE THAT IF NATIONAL AND REGIONAL NEWS AGENCIES ARE ESTABLISHED IN LATIN AMERICA, THE SPONSORING GOVERNMENTS WOULD INSURE THAT THESE AGENCIES PROMOTE THE FREE FLOW OF INFORMATION AND NEWS, NOT RESTRICT IT. WE WOULD ALSO HOPE THAT PRIVATELY OWNED NEWS AGENCIES -- BOTH NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL -- WOULD CONTINUE TO OPERATE FREELY AND WITHOUT LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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DISCRIMINATION WITHIN THE AREA.

6. THE UNITED STATES BELIEVES THAT A FREE PRESS IS THE BEDROCK OF INDIVIDUAL LIBERTY. CONTROL OF THE MEDIA, EVEN FOR WHAT MIGHT APPEAR TO BE OVERRIDING REASONS, IS DANGEROUS BECAUSE IT CAN EASILY LEAD TO TOTAL GOVERNMENT CENSORSHIP. A FREE PRESS CAN BE AWKWARD, ANNOYING, AND SOMETIMES IRRESPONSIBLE. IN THE LONG RUN, HOWEVER, WE

HAVE FOUND THAT IT IS ONE OF THE BEST GUARANTEES THAT
THE INTERESTS OF THE PEOPLE WILL BE PROTECTED.

ROBINSON

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